

THE KALIFORNSKI



NEWSLETTER OF THE SLAVIC-AMERICAN CULTURAL ORGANIZATION
P.O. BOX 226 - WATSONVILLE, CA. 95077
(A NON-PROFIT - NON-RELIGIOUS & NON-POLITICAL ORGANIZATION)

EDITORS:

Agnes Gospodnetic Mifsud
Nina Matulich

AUTUMN 2011



Happy Thanksgiving

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Happy Autumn Everyone!

Thank you to those who attended the BBQ Picnic held on Sunday, July 10, 2011 at the Corralitos Padre Park. A total of 271 adults and 2 children were served including 6 takeouts. It was a huge success, largely in part to Peter Kovacich and his crew for cooking up some great food!

Guests of SACO included 1 scholarship recipient and 1 parent along with the 8 amazing musicians of the Novi Stari Tamburiza.

More thanks go out to the helpers-Nina Matulich on reservations, Helen Marinovich Ukestad, Charles Ukestad and Norma Hansen on raffle tickets, Mary Marinovich Siefke on drink tickets, Agnes Gospodnetic Mifsud, Helen Mekis Ostoja and Joy Cicisly on dessert serving and Linda Wathen Espejo on door table help. The raffle helpers calling out numbers were Agnes & Mike Mifsud and also many thank you's to the bartenders, John Vodanovich and Mike Mifsud.

Also, I would like to thank Dr. Eric & Teresa Del Piero for bringing along a visiting exchange student, Mare Maltaric from Dubrovnik. She was a pleasure to meet.

The next SACO event will be the Christmas Dinner to be held on Saturday, December 10, 2011 at the Watsonville Woman's Club. See you there everyone!

STEVE BELICK

S.A.C.O. OFFICERS

President ~ Steve Belick ~ 477-7523

Vice-President ~ Peter Kovacich ~ 724-0071

Treasurer ~ Agnes Gospodnetic Mifsud ~ 637-2744

Recording Secretary ~ Linda Wathen Espejo ~ 724-2892

Financial Secretary ~ Nina Matulich ~ 724-7971



COMING EVENT

December 10, 2011 ~ Saturday ~ Christmas Dinner

WELCOME NEW S.A.C.O. MEMBERS

Mark & Debra Davis ~ Gilroy, CA

Diane Luksich Hergott ~ Santa Cruz, CA

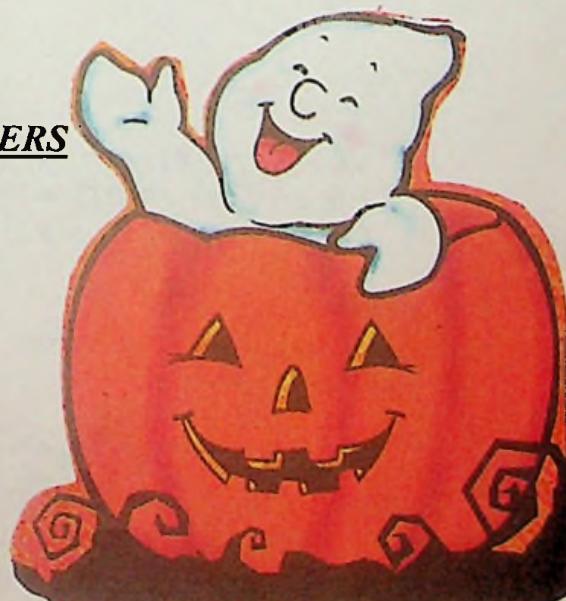
Marilyn Luksich Garbuh ~ Santa Cruz, CA

Adam & Heidi Mitchell Family ~ Los Altos, CA

Jason & Becky Luksich Family ~ Santa Cruz, CA

Amelia Zupan ~ Los Angeles, CA

Joe Zupan ~ San Francisco, CA





IN MEMORIUM

RITA DEL PIERO STRINGARI

*91 years ~ May 10, 2011 ~ Watsonville, CA
Mother of Tim & Lorita Winfield
Sister of Aurora Mitchell & Richard Del Piero
Aunt of Dr. Eric, Marc & Kris Del Piero*

STEPHEN ZUPAN

*96 years ~ July 31, 2011 ~ Watsonville, CA
Uncle to numerous nieces and nephews*

ANDREW "ANDY" MEKIS

*91 years ~ August 20, 2011 ~ Santa Cruz, CA
Husband of Audrey
Father of Jim, Kathryn, Michael, Donna, Paul & Lisa
Brother of Helen Ostoja
Grandfather of 9 and 3 great-grandchildren*

ARTHUR "ART" GIORVAS

*83 years ~ September 27, 2011 ~ Santa Clara, CA
Husband of Lucille (Matiashevich)
Father of Steve & Cheryl
Grandfather of 2*



CORRESPONDENCE

Hi Nina,

The BBQ at Padre Park in Corralitos on July 10 was such an enjoyable event. You did a great job organizing it all and Peter Kovacich, as usual, excelled in the food preparation. The entertainment was very good.

Bea and I were joined by my sister, Anne Bennett. It was an opportunity to visit with old classmates, friends and neighbors.

You folks do nice work. We all appreciate it and thank you.

*Nick & Bea Drobot
Santa Cruz, CA*



Dear Nina,

We were so sad to not be able to come to the annual BBQ this year. Please keep us on your mailing list and we hope to see you soon at one of your upcoming events! We always have such a wonderful time meeting everyone.

*Thank you,
Justin & Pamela Jelincic
San Leandro, CA*



THANK YOU NOTE FROM THE 2011 SACO SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT

Dear Mr. Violich & SACO,

I, Jacob Gospodnetich am very grateful for the scholarship you have provided me with. The amount of the scholarship will cover next semester, and books at Cabrillo Community College. I am very thankful to be blessed with this scholarship. This scholarship will prove to be very useful to me in the near future as I look forward to my college life and explore my heritage. Thank you for your generosity in donating this scholarship. I feel honored that I was chosen for this reward. Enclosed in this letter is a receipt of my registration at Cabrillo College. Thank you for your most generous donation.



Sincerely,
Jacob M. Gospodnetich

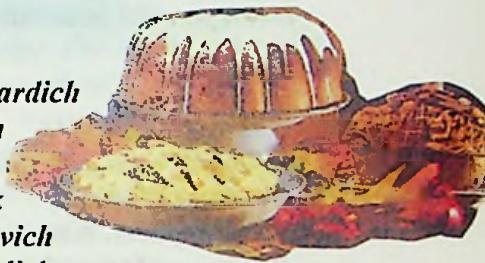
DESSERTS

BBQ Picnic
Sunday, July 10

Norma Hansen
Helen Marinovich Ukestad
Steve Millich
Mary Marinovich Siefke
S.A.C.O.
Judy Carey Eiskamp
Teresa Del Piero
Cathy Pekoch Schimpeler
Slavica Kusanovich Zalac
Nada Pazin
Lucille Deretich
Kathryn Zar Copriviza
Gary Gospodnetich
Betty Glavinic Jones
Diane Gribble
Susan Radin Gallagher



Janey Leonardich
Joyce Kalich
Judy Hager
Karen Belick
Mary Lipanovich
Stephanie Bulich
Christina Justus
Sylvia Kusanovich
Janice Rains
Ursula Puglizevich
Ann Gizdich
Marc Del Piero
Lillian Jercich Nielsen
Kathy Scurich O'Neil
Valerie Justus Rusconi
Clara Radin



PRIZES

Norma Hansen
John Vodanovich
Betty Kesovia Bobeda
Helen Marinovich Ukestad
S.A.C.O.
Maryanne Bulich Schnitter
Ann Banovac Moresco-strawberries
Teresa Del Piero
Tom Simmons
Nina Matulich
Lynne Hodges
Roseanne Kalich
Marc Del Piero
John Lukrich
Betty Glavinic Jones
Mark Davis

Hedy Claus
Diane Robey
Bob Leonardich
Steve Belick
Judy Carey Eiskamp
Dr. Eric Del Piero
Christina Justus
Frances Matulich Osorio
Alex Solano~strawberries & rose bouquets
Patsy Mills
Ted Nizenkoff
Bill Resetar
Gary Gospodnetich
Lillian Jercich Nielsen
Valerie Justus Rusconi
Genevieve Simunovich



*HVALA PUNO ~ THANK YOU VERY MUCH
WITH APPRECIATION!*

Nina Matulich

THE SLAV_ COMMUNITY OF WATSONVILLE, CA

Dear SACOnians:

A book came out earlier this year which is a collection of the old newspaper articles (1881-1920) that contained information about the Slavs of Watsonville. The title is "The Slav Community of Watsonville, California". If anyone is interested in buying this book (perhaps as a Christmas gift)), please contact me. It is not available except as pre-ordered. It is reprinted when the orders reach a minimum of ten. The cost is \$49.50. Free delivery around Watsonville, otherwise an extra \$12 for mailing within the U.S. It can also be ordered through Crossroads Books in Watsonville for an extra \$5. The book is hardbound, 836 pages, 8.5 x 11 inches, 270+ photos.

Tom Ninkovich
629 Main St., #115
Watsonville, CA 95076
831-247-4456
Email ~ tom@croatia-in-english.com



SUMMER INTERN FROM DUBROVNIK

SACO members Teresa and Eric Del Piero hosted a student from Dubrovnik, Croatia this summer. Mare Maltarić, who is a law student studying in Zagreb, worked as an intern for the City of Monterey. She is the third intern to work with Monterey from Dubrovnik, since the two became sister cities.

Mare arrived in the middle of June and recently returned to Croatia to complete her studies. She was also hosted the first few weeks by several other people, including SACO member Steve Millich. The Del Pieros had traveled to Croatia in early June and met Mare's mother before flying back to California.

Mare worked in the Finance and Risk Management offices for Monterey and also observed the City Attorney and the court system in Monterey County. She speaks three languages, Croatian, English and Italian. She experienced most of what the Monterey Peninsula has to offer, including whale watching, paddle boarding, the Monterey Bay Aquarium, the California Rodeo, the Moss Landing Antique Fair and of course the SACO BBQ. She traveled to Big Sur, San Francisco, Malibu and the Grand Canyon.

Mare was often asked what her favorite part of the trip was and although the Grand Canyon was a favorite, she said it was the people that she met while visiting the Monterey Peninsula that she will always remember.

The Del Pieros really enjoyed their month and a half with Mare and plan to see her and her mother in Croatia next year.

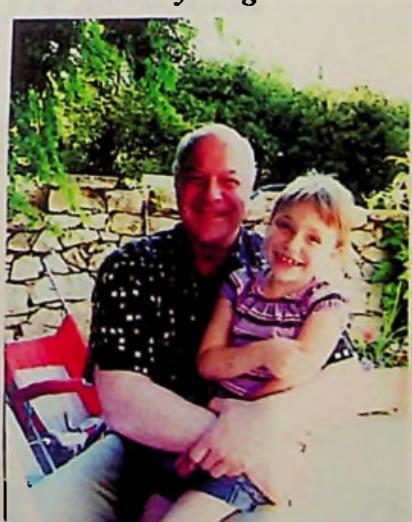
Eric with his young cousin Nin



Teresa with Eric's cousin, Niko Borkovic & his wife Rozalija in Mocici.



Mare with Katherine & Laura Hodges



September 2011 - Authors Donna Mekis and Kathryn Mekis Miller Present *Blossoms Into Gold.... in Croatia.*

Donna Mekis and her sister Kathryn Mekis Miller, co-authors of *Blossoms Into Gold: The Croatians in the Pajaro Valley*, presented their research on Croatian immigration to California in the country of Croatia on September 23, 2011. The invitation to speak came from *Matica Hrvatska*, the oldest historical and cultural organizations in Croatia, and the leading publisher of Croatian language books. The presentation was presented in both the English and Croatian languages at St. Nicholas Church in Čilipi, near Dubrovnik. Nina Skurić of Dubrovnik performed the Croatian translation. Nina is a member of the Skurić family of Cilipi, a family who sent many of its family members to Watsonville, California in the 19th and 20th centuries.

The program opened with traditional Croatian Klapa singers, followed by an introduction of the authors by Marija Radonić, the Vice-President of the Organization. She told the audience of 200 that the Mekis sisters (Donna and Kathy) are the granddaughters of Marko Mekiš of Poljice and Kate Korać Mekiš of Gruda, both of whom immigrated to Watsonville California in the early 20th century. She followed by saying that *Blossoms Into Gold: The Croatians in the Pajaro Valley* was released in 2009 to much acclaim, with 750 people attending the first two book presentations in Watsonville and Santa Cruz California.

Ivo Orešković, the Director of the State Archives of Dubrovnik, provided an introduction. The State Archives of Dubrovnik were founded in 1278 and is one of the most important historical sources for medieval and modern Mediterranean and Balkan history in the world. Orešković discussed the history of the Mekis family in the Konavle region to honor the authors, and went on to provide an outline of the period from 1850 to 1924 when families from this region lost more than half of their young male population to California emigration, particularly to the Pajaro Valley.

At the opening of their presentation, Donna and Kathy acknowledged the three Santa Cruz men who were integral to the publication of their book: historian, Sandy Lydon, George Ow Jr., and the late Morton Marcus (the husband of author, Donna Mekis).

The closing lines of the presentation were: "For the Croatian-Americans still living in Watsonville, and for you, here, who lost family members to America - this book has been dedicated to remembering and preserving the history and achievement of those who left. They travelled all the way from the Adriatic coast, to the Pajaro Valley of California, for their survival and the survival of their families, and in doing so, they became major players in the development of produce delivery systems in the United States and internationally."

The authors received a standing ovation for their presentation and were given bouquets of flowers from *Matica Hrvatska* for their work.

Croatian historians attending this presentation were: Niko Kapetanić, Marina Desin and Kate Bagoje. Attendees from Santa Cruz County included: Judge Kelsay and Claire Biancalana, Dr. John and Laura Walther, James, Noreen, Emily and Laura Schwartz, Diane Cunha, and 16 members of the Santa Cruz Mekis family.

The entire program was videotaped by Peter McGettigan for Community Television of Santa Cruz County, and will be aired at a future date.



Life...Both loss and celebration in Konavle

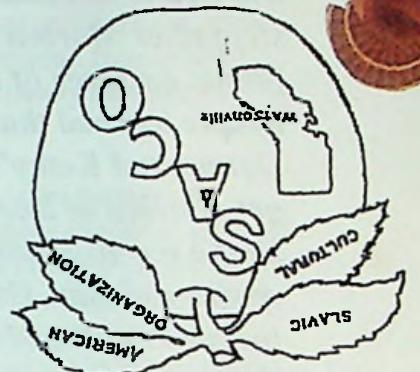
Six months after Matica Hrvatska invited Donna Mekis and Kathryn Mekis Miller to present their book, Blossoms into Gold, in Konavle, Croatia, Donna's son, Nicholas Galli, became engaged. Nicholas had traveled to Croatia on four previous occasions with his mother and stepfather Morton Marcus. Nick's fiancé, Jennifer Yee had been with the family on three of these trips, and fell in love with the country. When the couple learned that most of their family would be flying to Croatia for Donna and Kathy's book presentation, they decided to join the group and get married in Konavle. This homecoming was made even more poignant by the recent death of Nick's grandfather, the head of the Mekis family, Andrew Mekis. On Sept. 20th, one month after Andrew's death, 16 members of the Mekis family gathered with their Croatian relatives in their ancestral village of Poljice. Together they lit two candles in the graveyard chapel of Sveta Ana for both Andrew and his younger brother Nick Mekis, who died in 2009.

Jennifer Yee and Nicholas Galli were married five days later on Sept. 25th on a mountaintop near Velji Do overlooking Cavtat and the Adriatic Sea. Judge William Kelsay of Aptos officiated. A reception immediately followed at Konoba Konavle in Vojski Do, where a traditional Croatian wedding feast was served along with abundant toasting and Croatian singing.

Jennifer is a San Francisco native, the daughter of Susie Yee and her late husband, Kwock L. Yee of San Francisco. Jennifer graduated from Lowell H.S. and from UC Berkeley's Haas School of Business. She is employed as a Sr. Audit Manager at Deloitte & Touche in San Francisco. Nicholas is a Santa Cruz native, son of Peter Galli, Donna Mekis and her late husband, Morton Marcus, all of Santa Cruz. Nicholas graduated from Santa Cruz H.S., UC Santa Cruz, and San Francisco State Univ., where he completed a high school teaching credential in history, political science and economics.



DATED MATERIAL - Please Rush



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